

DIALOGUE

7

BETWEEN A

UNIVERSALIST

AND A

METHODIST.

BY REV. SAMUEL DUNNETT,

A MINISTER OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CANADA.

HAMILTON :

PRINTED AT THE CANADA CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE OFFICE,
CORNER OF KING AND JAMES STREETS.

1852.

be
be
in
co
m
st
th
w

an
fo
B
th
qu
th
ot
to

m
w
h
P

th
an
d
th

DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE WITH A UNIVERSALIST who had for several weeks been seeking an opportunity for an attack; who professed to be a man of learning, and supposed himself master of his business; which was to prove that God would, inevitably and unconditionally, save all mankind. He appeared to delight much in controversy, and feared no competitor. He professed strong sympathy for the Methodists, and extreme sorrow for their "delusion." His object was to convince them that they were wrong.

Methodist. I am open to conviction, and if wrong, am willing and anxious to be put right. And as you appear to have that for your object, by giving me new light in the truths of the Bible, that I may have a clearer and more distinct knowledge of the plan of salvation, I will take the liberty to ask you a few questions relative to your view of religion. Do you believe in the possibility of the regeneration of the human heart? or, in other words, do you believe it possible and necessary for man to enjoy a knowledge of sins forgiven in this world?

Universalist. Yes, I do believe it is that alone which will make us truly happy.

Meth. You are right, for there is no true happiness but that which is produced in us by the love of God shed abroad in the heart. That person who has this witness and retains it, is happy here, and if faithful to death will be happy to all eternity.

Univ. Yes, God is love, and he delights to make us happy; this was his design when he made man, that he should enjoy an endless rest with him.

Meth. That I believe to be in accordance with his creative designs, and it is only for us to comply with the conditions of the gospel by using the means put within our reach, and we

shall enjoy all blessings, both temporal and spiritual, that are requisite for us for time and Eternity. But when we reflect that it is only the willing and obedient that are on safe and happy grounds, how painful to the considerate and reflecting mind, to see the thousands of our fellow creatures, by disobedience to the Divine requirements, daily making themselves miserable here, and posting on to everlasting destruction, "to linger in eternal pain and death forever."

Univ. Well sir, I will tell you, I once believed as you do, but I have found a better way. Indeed, I profess now to have a better opinion of God than to believe that he will punish to all eternity his creatures whom he so dearly loves. No sir! God forbid that I should entertain such thoughts as these for one moment of that Being who is all mercy and love.

Meth. Well sir, you appear anxious to entertain exalted ideas of the Supreme Being, and it is right you should; but I fear that these notions which you form of the mercy of God are driving you to a dangerous presumption. I believe you said a short time ago that you believed in the necessity of regeneration, because the scripture says, "Ye must be born again."

Univ. I do, and believe that the soul will be made holy here, before it goes to that eternal rest which is provided for all mankind, for as God loves him he will make him fit for heaven before he calls him away.

Meth. If you believe in the work of grace, you will grant that in order for this work of regeneration to take place in the soul, the sinner should reflect deliberately, and examine his heart candidly and impartially, that he may understand his real case, which cannot be done to profit without his reasoning powers.

Univ. Most assuredly, he requires his reasoning faculties; what can any man do without them?

Meth. And while reflecting on his past conduct, he should feel sorry for sins committed against God; then he should repent and exercise faith in God through Christ. Is not this about right according to the scriptures?

Univ. I have nothing very particular that I would urge

at pre
work
leave
do th

M
with
pel a
happ
ular,
ject
for a
we d

U
that
ture,
gard
land

M
men
an e
we
low
muc
he i
hear
limb
and
in t
mon
this
who
for
plan
kin

U
not
said
hav

at present against that; but still it does not prove that the work referred to will not be completed in all men before they leave this world. This is what I contend for, that God will do the work.

Meth. Yes, I see this is your opinion, but I cannot agree with you only on the grounds that the conditions of the gospel are complied with on the part of sinful man. Yet, I am happy to think that although we cannot agree in every particular, there is one thing in which we do agree; i.e., on the subject of temperance, and perhaps you will allow me to digress for a moment, to ask a question touching that point on which we do agree, viz. ; what is a drunkard good for?

Univ. Literally, good for nothing while in that condition; that is a bad habit. I look upon it as degrading to human nature, only calculated to make a man poor and miserable. I regard it as sinful, and heartily wish it were banished from our land never more to appear.

Meth. I am glad to hear you express such warm attachment to the cause of temperance, and I am also happy to get an expression from you relative to the act of drunkenness; but we will return again to the subject under discussion. And allow me to represent to you a man in a state of inebriation, so much so that he has no knowledge of what he says, or where he is. You see him fall; he lies besmeared with mud; you hear him belching out his oaths and curses, upon his eyes, and limbs, his heart and flesh, and upon the God that made him, and the loving, all-atoning Lamb of God, that died for him; in this state and act he dies. The spirit has fled without a moment's reflection. You will, no doubt, see my object in all this, which is to prepare the way, to ask the following question; where is he gone? I need not add, he is not gone to heaven, for you have saved me that trouble, and the word of God is very plain on that point; for it says "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Univ. How have I saved you the trouble of saying "he is not gone to heaven?" I do not understand what you mean. I said no such thing as that he could not go to heaven, neither have I intimated such a thing. My argument has been the

reverse of that, and I am prepared to maintain my position ; but you rather appear inclined to put a wrong construction on what I have said.

Meth. It is foreign from my intention, I can assure you, to put a wrong construction on what you have said. My object is to get the truth, let it come from where it will. But let me understand you. Did you not admit 1st, That nothing short of regeneration can make a man truly happy? 2nd, That the soul must and would, according to your own theory, be born again before it entered its eternal rest? 3rd, That the sinner should reflect on his past life, repent, and believe in God? 4th, That the character above referred to, in that state is good for nothing, but is a sinful, and miserable man? And now, in that very condition he has left the world—without a change of heart. He has had no time for repentance and faith in God. Thus, if I understand you, you admit the truth of scripture, and the reason of the thing, that the man in question is not gone to heaven; and now I want you to answer my question, and tell me where he is gone.

Universalist paused for a while and looked as much astonished as if he had suddenly trodden upon a snake, and refused to make any reply.

Meth. Will you please to tell me what is become of that soul, sir?

Univ. You think he is gone to hell, I suppose.

Meth. Do you not think so? or what do you think about it? It will do you no harm to tell. Tell then, plainly and honestly, what you think about it, and why you think as you do. Let us hear, out with it. Do you not think he is gone to hell?

Univ. No, I do not think he is gone to hell; for I believe it is contrary to the nature and attributes of the Divine Being, to send him to what you call "hell." It would be unmerciful to create a soul that must live forever, and then punish him to all eternity in "hell."

Meth. Well sir, according to your account of the matter, he is neither gone to heaven nor hell. Now you have told us plainly and repeatedly, where you think he is not gone, and I think it is due to the company here present, that you should

tell where you think he is gone. I wish to entertain charity for you, that you are sincere in your belief, and honest in your intentions; but should you refuse to answer this question, it will leave grounds for suspicion.

Univ. He is gone to God, for the spirit shall return to God who gave it; and will not the Judge of all the earth do right? I believe he will.

Meth. Yes, I believe as much as you, or any other man, that God will do right. But I think there can be no harm for us to inquire what is right in this case; that is to say; is it right for God to deny himself and take the drunkard to heaven? or, to be true to his word, and send him down to hell? One thing is certain, He cannot lie. "God abideth faithful; He cannot deny himself."

Univ. I believe he is gone to heaven, and if it is necessary for him to repent, and he did not do it here, he will have a chance to do it hereafter, and so get prepared for heaven. This is the only place in eternity designed and prepared for God's intelligent beings. You believe in hell-fire, and brimstone, and Devils,—beings literally existing in a lake of fire and brimstone. I believe in no such cruelty—no such tyranny in the Divine Being.

Meth. You will not deny the use of the term "Devil," by the inspired writers, and I presume you will not deny but it means something, and if it has no reference to a real being, as you suppose, or an evil spirit, who, according to the scriptures, „walketh about as a roaring lion," what does it mean? To say that it has no meaning, would be to deny the word of God in part, and, virtually, the whole. But, to say the least, it would go to accuse the inspired writers of vain redundancy—using words to no purpose. Please to let us see what disposition you will make of the term "Devil."

Univ. The term "Devil" literally means a destroyer; hence, there is evil desire, or in other words, a lust to wickedness in the heart of man, which unholy principle is calculated, more or less, to mar the peace, and destroy the happiness of mankind. This is the tempter; this is the principle which leads man into sin. When you Methodists fall into sin you lay the blame

to the "Devil," as if "Devil" means some real being. This is an easy way of getting clear of blame. To talk about "inconsistencies," I am sure it is inconsistent to lay blame on one of whom you know nothing, and cannot even prove his existence. The truth is, when a man is tempted he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. This is the "Devil," and all the "Devil" there is.

Meth. I begin to think (but I hope I may be mistaken) that you are laboring more for victory than you are for truth. I must confess that you have a strange method of proving your position, for all your arguments appear to be governed by the rule, dogmatism! When you stand in the affirmative you generally prove your point by, "It is so, it cannot be any other way," and when you stand in the negative to any position you merely reverse it, "It cannot be so, it is impossible;" but let that go for what it will make. And before making any reply to your objections to the existence of the "Devil," I wish to ascertain from you whether you are of that class of Universalists who believe in the atonement of Christ or not.

Univ. I believe in the atonement, but not in the same light that you do.

Meth. Do you believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and that he was a holy person, pure and immaculate—that guile was not found in his mouth, nor sin in his heart?

Univ. Yes, I believe that.

Meth. The evil principle, or lust which you call the "Devil," does it exist in the heart of what the scriptures call a holy person?

Univ. The principle of which I speak I understand to be an unholy principle, and I do not understand sin and holiness, but as opposite principles.

Meth. I am willing to give you credit for your honesty on this point; but according to your doctrine, Christ must have had a wicked heart, and consequently could not (as the scriptures say he did) have made atonement for the human family. By this argument you make your case worse than it was before. You have all along been contending for the ultimate salvation of all men, on the grounds that Jesus Christ, the Son of

God, a holy person, died for them ; but now you prove (if you prove anything) that Christ was unholy, which entirely destroys your own argument, and if true, the whole plan of salvation.

Univ. You suspected my honesty a short time ago, and I have good grounds now to suspect yours. You have perverted (and I think intentionally) my meaning. I said no such thing that Christ had an evil heart, but I said that he was holy, and what you could have drawn such a conclusion from, I am at a loss to tell ; surely not from any thing that I have said.

Meth. You said that all the "Devil" there is, or ever was, is that evil desire, or lust which exists in the heart of a wicked man—that wherever this exists it evinces an unholy heart—that the mind is thereby defiled ; this shows that the idea you intended to convey is, that the temptations of men originate in themselves. Is not this your doctrine ?

Univ. Yes, and the scriptures will bear me out in that.

Meth. Then all I have to do is, to prove that Christ was tempted, and according to your doctrine this will prove him to have been an unholy person. Reflect a moment ! how wicked must his heart have been ! how exceedingly atrocious that principle which originated in the Son of God ! It not only existed but raged to such a degree, that those diabolical aspirations burst at last in unholy accents like the following ; "If thou art the Son of God"—thus pretending he did not know himself ; "Cast thyself down,"—a desire to commit suicide ; "Command these stones to be made bread, fall down and worship me,"—Idolatry ! "All the kingdoms of the earth will I give thee"—give whom ? Myself. You will, I presume, discover from this that your course of reasoning is inconsistent, and while it may slightly support one part of your creed, it cuts the other to peices. Have you any objections to what I have here stated ?

Univ. I have many objections but am not inclined to carry the argument on that point any further, for if I should I presume you would have it your own way ; but I must remind you of one of your misrepresentations, that is, when you said that I made Christ out to be a murderer ; my surprise is great,

but not equal to my indignation. You know better, and one would naturally expect better things from you.

Meth. Well sir, let us take the matter coolly; we will arrive at a conclusion sooner and easier. You will perceive that Christ was tempted to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and if he had, you will grant that it must have dashed him to peices, unless a miracle had been wrought to preserve him. Now, if temptation is nothing more than the evil desire originating in the heart; it follows from this, that he desired to kill himself, from the fact that he desired to throw himself down and must have known that the fall, aside from Divine interposition, must have killed him. Therefore, to say the least, it would be desiring to kill himself; this you can call by what name you please, only do not call it a good desire.

Univ. You appear to be laboring very hard to prove nothing. I have not denied that he was thus tempted, neither do I deny that the distance which he would have fallen was not sufficient to kill any man; but he did not throw himself down, therefore he was not guilty of the act.

Meth. I am not laboring to prove Christ guilty of any wrong. God forbid! I believe the very opposite of this; but I am laboring to show, that according to your view of temptation he must have been a sinner. For, although he did not throw himself down, yet according to your theory, he desired to do it, and therefore literally desired to kill himself, which desire is sin, and the same argument will apply to every other temptation which he endured, both at that time in the temple, and during his whole life. And he was "tempted in all points like as we are," only mark! the Apostle says, "yet without sin." Hence, temptation is not sin, neither is man his own tempter always. But according to the word of God there are Devils, real beings, capable of moving, thinking, acting, in various ways, and suffering. And it is their object to destroy the peace of man, and ruin his soul.

Univ. You will have to use some stronger arguments than these before you will convince me that the Devil is a real being. The scriptures speak of the tempter, or in other words, the destroyer, under many figures. Instance the "Dragon,"

the "Serpent." In the first you see the Devil is a fabulous beast, in the second a common snake. We read of the Devil's being cast out of men; here the disease is represented by the term, Devil, that is, destroyer of life. When the person was cured it was said the Devil was cast out. It is said the Devil entered into the herd of swine, that is, destruction, or in other words the destroyer, and so man when he is drawn away of his own lust is tempted; this to him is the destroyer of his peace. But from none of these circumstances can it be inferred that the Devil is a real being.

Meth. I begin to fear that I shall not be able to produce sufficient argument to convince you that the Devil is a real being, for I am inclined to think that you have purposely placed yourself beyond the reach of argument, especially on this point. But to show you that I am not disposed to evade an answer to your objections, I would remark, that the scriptures do indeed represent the Devil to us under different modes of expression. But if that is an argument against his real existence, the same would bear against the existence of Holy Angels, for they are represented as men, women, wind, fire, &c. And on the same principle, we may deny the existence of heaven, because it is described by the terms, City, Mansion, House, Kingdom, Abraham's bosom, Paradise, &c., &c. We might also deny the existence of God on that principle, and indeed almost every thing else. You say that the Devil is a fabulous beast, because he is represented by the term "Dragon." You say the Devil is a common snake because he is represented by the epithet, "Serpent." I will not stop to offer any more remarks on that point, for I am conscious you must see the inconsistency of such quibbling, and I think you feel a little ashamed of it. But again, you say the Devil's being cast out means no more than the curing of certain of diseases. Here you identify the Devil with the disease. This view of the subject will not help you in the least, for, though you have brought it up to prove that the Devil is not a real being, it is only calculated to confirm the opposite. For, admitting that the disease means the Devil, it proves real and personal existence, and intelligence. This disease could talk. Hear how it spoke to Simon Magus,

"Paul we know, and Christ we know, but who art thou?" Those diseases could tell Christ, "We know thee who thou art &c.," they had calculation and sensible impressions—"Art thou come to torment us before the time?" "If thou cast us out suffer us to enter into the herd of swine." Does not this prove personal existence, intelligence, reason, and a sense of suffering? and what more does it require to constitute a real being? Should you say it was the man or person who spoke and manifested these marks of intelligence, the difficulty would still be as great. Because it would go to prove that Christ cast the intelligence out of the man, and no one would thank him for that, for it would be doing harm instead of good—it would be a curse instead of a blessing. But this would be to annihilate the man, for the same that spoke to Christ was cast out; therefore if it was the man who said, "If thou cast us out," the man of course was cast out of the man. Again, you will see your theory incorrect, I think, from another consideration, viz., this same something that was cast out of the man, on a certain occasion, as you no doubt remember, at its own request, was cast into the herd of swine. Now if that something who spoke to Christ and said, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" was the man, then the man was not only cast out of the man, but he was cast into the herd of swine, and the "swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea and perished in the waters." And you would reasonably conclude that the man was drowned with them. And was not that a great feat for the pure and immaculate Son of God—the Saviour of sinners—to display among men?

Univ. I believe in the existence of the Devil as well as you do, but I believe it is a principle, and not a real being. Whatever will destroy the happiness of man in this world may properly enough be designated the Devil.

Meth. There are many things that are calculated to destroy our peace for the time being, which cannot with any degree of propriety be designated by that epithet. Instance, disappointment, hunger, thirst, misfortunes of various kinds—it would include physicians, parents, and even our best friends; for at times they inflict pain, both of body and mind. And even the

operations of the Holy Spirit inflict pain to the sinner's heart, when it shows him how he stands in the sight of God. These are not to be called Devils, for although they may destroy to some extent our present peace, yet to the righteous a greater good is designed to result therefrom. Hence, those things which lessen our happiness are not devils, though the Devil labors to destroy our peace here, and our souls hereafter.

Univ. I can scarcely hear those words—destruction of the soul—used, and feel right to a person who can indulge the thought of hell-fire—eternal punishment to be endured by God's intelligent creatures.

Meth. All that may be, and yet the fact remain the same, for I hope you do not think your judgment is the standard for the universe. These things are generally very disagreeable to sinners, equally as much so to others as they are to you, nevertheless you may be annoyed; you may doubt and hope there is no such place, but remember none of these things will annihilate it.

Univ. If I believed it possible my feelings, no doubt, would be very different. But I am firm in my opinion and feel myself fully prepared to prove to you, and to the world, and that to a demonstration too, that the idea of a future hell is a complete infatuation. I was brought up, however, to believe that there was such a place, and under the dreadful, tormenting fear thereof I lived till the age of man; but since I have become capable of judging for myself, and having applied myself to reading and study, I am led to see differently, and the more I reflect upon the attributes of God the more I am confirmed in my opinion.

Meth. I am sorry that you have come to this conclusion, and especially in such a hurry; for my impression is, that if you would diligently peruse and faithfully study the word of God, you would soon be led to see things in another light.

Univ. I have read the word of God over, and over, and over again, and it is from that I have drawn my opinion, and you cannot prove the things which you affirm. I am bold to say that there is not a text in the whole Bible that goes to prove future punishment. I am aware that many are so con-

strued, but you pervert their meaning, by applying those scriptures to eternity which refer only to time. You imagine that you see hell-fire in almost every thing you read, while some of the inspired writers do not even mention the term. The Apostle Paul, for example, does not speak of hell-fire in all his writings. What idea of future punishment can we gather from him?

Meth. I gather enough from the Apostle to convince me—and the same ought to convince you—that if you do not repent and turn to God you will be punished in eternity. Yes sir, you will be one of that number, “who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power,” “When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” All this and much more is obtained from the Apostle Paul in favor of future punishment, although you say he does not mention it in all his writings.

Univ. I have no hesitancy in saying that the wicked will be punished with everlasting destruction; the only difficulty here, is, how we understand the term, “everlasting.” You think it extends to eternity, whereas it is not designed to extend beyond the bounds of time. The scripture affords ample proof of this. Instance, the “everlasting hills,” Gen., 49-26; you do not believe those hills will always continue in their present state, and especially if you believe as the Methodists generally do, that this world will be destroyed by fire. How can you reconcile this with your view of everlasting? Was not Canaan promised to the Jews for an “everlasting possession?” Gen., 17-8. This possession was forfeited, they were routed from this land, and for many centuries have been scattered through the wide world. So their “everlasting possession” came to an end. An “everlasting priesthood” was promised to Phineas, the son of Eleazar, Gen., 25-13; this priesthood, I presume you will grant, had an end, although it was called an “everlasting priesthood.” An everlasting statute was given to the Jews, Lev., 26-34—“And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you to make an atonement for the

children of Israel, for all their sins once a year. And he did as the Lord commanded Moses." These were yearly atonements to be offered by the priests, and were never intended to go beyond the Jewish dispensation, yet it was called an "everlasting statute." If everlasting statute does not extend beyond time, and the other scriptures that I have quoted, tell me, why should everlasting punishment?

Meth. If that rule of yours is a good one, it will work both ways, and if it does it will prove too much even for you, and it will finally destroy your theory. You must see that if the term everlasting when applied to the wicked has no reference to future punishment, the same term of course when applied to the righteous has no reference to future joys. But as you have quoted scripture to prove that "everlasting" has an end, allow me to show you from the same authority that properly speaking it has no end. The term is used about 75 times in the word of God, and in four instances, those named by you, the term is used in an accommodated sense; you will see seventy-one remaining, all of which may be properly explained in their utmost latitude of meaning—having no end. Let us try a few of them to balance against those which you brought forward. "He called on the name of the everlasting God," Gen., 21-23. "Blessed be God from everlasting to everlasting," Ps., 41-13. "The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," Isa., 9-6. "The redeemed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy," &c., &c., Isa., 35-10. "The everlasting God, the Creator fainteth not," Isa., 40-28. To say that "everlasting" here has an end is in effect to say that God has an end—that the everlasting joy of the righteous has an end—that the everlasting praise of God has an end. These are only a few as a sample out of the many which the word of God contains, that bear equally as strong on the point. And let me say that everlasting destruction and everlasting chains are to be understood in the same sense as those above. To leave this term everlasting out of the question and apply it neither to the righteous nor the wicked, I would like to know how you prove that there is any happiness to be enjoyed after death.

Univ. The better way is to dispose of one thing, and settle one point before we enter upon another. The term, "everlasting," is under discussion; you have made your reply and labored to prove that it means unending existence. You have brought forward texts which you think go to confirm your opinion, and suppose they should in some degree favor your view, those which I have produced will go as strong, and indeed stronger against it. But those¹ you have passed over in silence, and I think rather contemptibly. These are portions of the scripture as well as those which you quoted, and my texts have meaning as well as yours, and if the passages which you referred to mean unending duration, those that I produced evidently mean a limited period. Now for example, take the phrase, "everlasting destruction," which you quoted with so much confidence as meaning unending punishment, and by what rule are we to tell in which light it is to be understood. I have as good reason to believe that it means a limited period as you have that it means unending punishment, and when the goodness of God is taken into account I have a much better reason.

Meth. It was not my intention to treat you with contempt, I admit that your argument has weight in it, but I intend to show you that it is not heavy enough. And it is on this ground—that you have produced four texts in which everlasting will admit of a limited explanation. Now you cannot find six more if you try till the day of your death, which if you could would only make ten in all where the word would admit of a limited explanation. Here would then be at least, from sixty to sixty-five places in the Bible where the term, "everlasting," is used which will not admit of a limited explanation without entirely destroying the sense. Instance, "everlasting God"—that is, limited God—"everlasting life"—life that has an end—"everlasting joy"—joy for a time. God is an "everlasting King." "Lead me in the way everlasting"—in the way that will have an end! The righteous in the end shall have "everlasting life," that is, in the end shall have a life that comes to an end. You must see that to explain the scriptures in this way would be to render the word of God of no effect. Now

then, by which will you be governed? by those few where the word appears to admit of a limited explanation? or by the sweeping majesty where it cannot possibly admit of a limited explanation without making nonsense? As I said before, so I say again, your objection is not destitute of weight, but it is not sufficient for a foundation on which I would be willing to risk my all. It is a mystery to me how any man who is capable of knowing as much as you do, would dare to build on such a sandy foundation, when even those texts on which you so much rely are susceptible of a more extensive explanation. For in the promise that Canaan was for an "everlasting possession," an eye was had to the original meaning of the term, because Canaan was a type of the everlasting rest of God's people. The same may be said of the Priesthood, and yearly atonement. The "everlasting hills" is a hyperbole, a form of speech much in use both before and after Jacob's time. It was used purposely to impress upon the minds of Jacob's sons the extent of the blessings promised to Abraham—a beautiful, striking, and most impressive figure, of which no person who is in search of truth could be disposed to take advantage. And I am candid when I say, I do not see how it is possible for you to expect endless happiness while you retain your view of the term, "everlasting."

Univ. I have good grounds to believe in the ultimate happiness of myself, and of all men, but let us confine ourselves to the scripture. You build your faith in future punishment on the terms "everlasting," and "ever and ever," and like expressions, which I do not yet believe express endless duration. If they do, why did not Christ use the same term in promising happiness that he did in threatening punishment? For example: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Here you will see a marked distinction in the application of terms—to the righteous, "eternal life," that is, endless life—to the wicked, "everlasting punishment," as if Christ purposely selected and applied the terms to their appropriate places—"everlasting punishment," meaning punishment in proportion to the crime. And again he says, "I will give unto them *eternal* life," mark you! *eternal* life, and "they shall never perish." On this I am willing to risk my all.

Meth. You ask why Christ did not use the same term in both cases, intimating that if he had, your views would be different. Let me observe that Christ did use the same term in both cases, he spoke in Greek, and your Greek Testament will show you that the difference, if any there be, is not made by Christ, but by the English translators, and it is a further proof that the words are synonymous. I will give it to you as it stands in the Greek Testament. "These shall go away into *Kolasin aionion*, but the righteous into *Loen aionion*." Matth. 25-46. You can see for yourself, here in the Testament, take it and read. I do not want you to take my word for it, but look for yourself and be satisfied:

Univ. I am not a Greek scholar.

Meth. Neither am I, but here is my Greek grammar which contains the alphabet, look; here is the Greek alphabet explained by English letters; now look in the Greek Testament, here are the words. Do you see any difference in the characters? or in the accent? is it not exactly the same in both words? Look here.

Univ. I am not a judge of the Greek—I do not profess to be, and therefore I decline saying anything on that point for fear I might be wrong.

Meth. I wish you were as conscientious in some other matters of opinion, and as much afraid of judging wrong as you appear to be in this. But let us try and see if we cannot get at the matter another way, and bring it to a final issue. You say the term, "eternal," means endless duration, on this point we agree. Now, inasmuch as it means unending duration when applied to the righteous, it must mean the same when applied to the wicked, if this is the invariable meaning of the word, as you say it is, and as I believe it is. Hence, Christ says, "The righteous shall go into life eternal." Jude says, in speaking of the wicked, "They are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Christ says, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall be in danger of eternal damnation." Mark, 3-29.

Univ. You have not given a proper explanation of "Jude." The context shows that he had reference to the Cities that were destroyed—Sodom, and others around it—by fire. Fire is eter-

nal, no doubt, but that element will always exist, therefore, may with propriety be termed "Eternal fire." And the text which you quoted from "Mark" does not prove that any soul will ever suffer eternal damnation.

Meth. You say that Jude had reference to the Cities, that is, the houses and land I suppose. I admit they were destroyed by fire, but did the houses "give themselves over to fornication?" did they "go about after strange flesh?" and are these houses set forth as an example to other houses, that they may not do the same? and are these houses now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? If they are, poor things! they are very much to be pitied. Whatever it was that went after "strange flesh," and "gave themselves over to fornication," the same are "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," and whether they were houses and land, or rational and accountable beings, I leave candid men to judge: You say that Mark, 3-29, does not prove that any soul will suffer eternal damnation. I did not bring it up for that specific purpose, but merely to show that it was possible for a man eternally to suffer: And you must see that there is such a thing as eternal damnation, or man would not be in danger of suffering it. One of two things you must acknowledge to be true, either that there is eternal punishment, or that Christ told that which was not true when he said, "He that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost shall be in danger of eternal damnation," when at the same time he is not in danger if there is no eternal damnation.

Univ. It is the Divine purpose, ultimately, to save all men. Thus says the Apostle, "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." This is my belief—on this truth I am willing to rest.

Meth. You confound the will of God with his purpose, and I conceive there is a marked difference, God will have them to be saved, but they will not be saved. Christ would have gathered the Jews as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings but they would not. The will of God was not done in this case. You will not say that the will of God was done in the case of the Laodiceans; his will was that they should be either hot, or cold, and they were neither, but lukewarm.

Univ. There are some things in the scriptures that are hard to be understood, and in many places they contradict each other, principally owing to incorrect translation. And were we sure that the whole was correctly translated, we would be safe in confining ourselves to scripture terms in deciding the question, but there are doubts of this, and reasonably entertained too; and whenever we find any portion of the scriptures to come in contact with the Divine attributes, we may be confident the error is in the translation, and in view of this, I deem it expedient for a final settlement of the question, to have recourse to the attributes of God. We know that "God is love," in this we cannot be mistaken, and if "God is love," he is consequently good, and perfectly good, and to punish a soul eternally, is opposed to goodness both in kind and degree. Therefore I argue that, from that principle of goodness, essential to the Deity, God will not, indeed he cannot, punish a soul eternally, for it is opposed to every principle in a God of love. To punish a soul as you say he will would be to oppose himself, and consequently to deny himself; this he cannot do, "for if we believe not, yet God abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself." Would you, or could you punish your own child in fire and brimstone to all eternity even if you had the power? I answer, No. How much less reason then is there to believe that God will do it.

Meth. You argue now from the Divine goodness, that God will not punish the wicked in eternity, as if he is so good that he will be swerved by finite or human sympathy to take a course of administration, repugnant to the general good and happiness of the Universe, to accommodate the whimsical notion of a Universalist. God is good, I know, and in this truth I rejoice, and because he is good all his plans, purposes, and administrations, have a reference to the general good of the Universe, as the Supreme Magistrate over all intelligencies. But he has other worlds to look to as well as this, and as a public officer his administration must be consistent with his law. Prompted by goodness, he established a law for the Universe, and goodness, wisdom, justice, and truth, required this law to provide for the safety and happiness of the whole Empire. The same principles require that these laws be, either literally or

in the spirit of them, carried into effect so as to secure the ends of good government, and should offenders be treated with neglect, other intelligences far beyond us both in point of mind and morals, would have just reason of complaint. You say God is too good to punish a soul to all eternity; you might as well say that God is too good to carry his own law into effect. God says of the wicked, "They shall be punished with everlasting destruction." Your argument goes to show that God is too good to be true to his word. It looks to you like cruelty, but it looks to me to be an act resulting from wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth, and consequently the punishment of the impenitent cannot be avoided without endangering the ends of good government. Let us suppose a case, a criminal convicted of a capital crime. It is the duty of the judge to pass sentence of death. Now remember, he is a public officer, and though the passing of this sentence may arouse all the tender sympathies of his nature, yet it is essential to secure the public safety. Should persons of this character be allowed to rove at large, the safety of all good citizens would be endangered. Robberies, murders, devastation, ruin, and the final extermination of our race would soon follow. The same disorder would exist throughout the entire universe of God, should he, as the public officer thereof pass over with indifference, transgressions in this lower world. Suppose our government should let all murderers, thieves, robbers, and licentious persons of every description, take their own course; would not this be to countenance their conduct? Surely it would, and purposely, too, endangering the safety of good subjects. Could this be called a good government? certainly not. The same argument will apply to the Divine government, and the punishment of the wicked is inflicted on the same principle. Therefore I say, God is good, and for that reason, "The wicked shall not go unpunished." You quoted 2 Tim., 2-13, to show that God is faithful and will not punish the sinner, when in fact it proves the very opposite of this. If we deny him he also will deny us; if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. To what then does he abide faithful? We answer, to this; that if we deny him he will deny us, and to deny us is not to own us as his, but on the contrary, it is to say, I know you not, depart from me into everlasting fire.

Univ. Suppose a part of mankind to suffer, as you term it, in hell-fire forever, that is, eternally. God knew what would become of them before he made them, and if he knew they would go to hell, I ask in the name of common sense, why did he create them? why did he bring them into existence to suffer eternal pain? or do you suppose he did not know the consequences, but created intelligent beings as a kind of experiment, merely to see how they would act?

Meth. The ideas which you design to convey, I presume, are the following: 1. That God foresaw all things from Eternity, and 2. That all things serve his Divine will, that is, all things are as he designed they should be.

Univ. The idea is this, God being absolutely perfect in knowledge, must necessarily have seen and known from eternity, all things that would transpire. And knowing as he must have done when he made man, that according to your doctrine millions would go to hell and be tormented eternally. An act of this kind, and under these circumstances, can be reconciled with no better principles than tyranny and cruelty.

Meth. I wonder you have not resorted to that weapon of defense before this time, for I was aware it is your strong hold. But I do not see how the foreknowledge of God ought to have prevented him from making intelligent beings, and placing them on a state of probation, merely because short-sighted worms of earth cannot comprehend the whole matter, and discover every link in the chain of all events. I am sorry to hear you speak as you do, for to me it looks like presumption. You profess to be a reasonable man, and to believe in the Divine authenticity of the Bible, and how dare you bring such awful charges against the Divine Being? Where a text of scripture is presented which does not favor your views you are sure to question either the truth of it, or the correctness of the translation, or else you will charge God with injustice and cruelty in his administration. The truth is, God has made us moral agents, and his knowledge does not by any means effect the moral acts of man, or curtail in the least that principle of moral volition which he has implanted within us. You intimate 1st, that God must foreknow all things; 2nd, knowing all things from eternity he created man with a malignant de-

sign; 3rd, manifested his cruelty by punishing them for sin. Thus, because you cannot comprehend the Almighty, yet determined to have your own view, you will either charge God with injustice on the one hand, or call in question the truth of the Bible on the other.

Univ. I do not accuse the Almighty of injustice. I say he is holy, just and good, and because he is, I say he would not have created man when he knew he would suffer eternal pain.

Meth. The difficulty with you is this, you are not only the accuser, but the judge, and the jury in the case of Divine government, arrogating to yourself the right to say how things ought to be. Hence you say, God ought to save all men, good or bad. God has a right to save them, and must to sustain the purity of his character; because he has made them. Now, let the Almighty speak for himself. He says, "It is by grace ye are saved," not of debt! Paul obtained mercy, not claimed it as a right. You say man will not be punished in eternity. God says they shall if they die, without repentance. "The wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God," "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever," "They are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," "They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" &c. You differ indeed from this—you take umbrage at it, but remember it is not so much with me you differ, as it is with your God! If you stand in the negative to this, you throw Jehovah in the lie; and with him you must eventually settle the point.

Univ. You will not deny that God foreknows all things, for if he did not he would not be a perfect being in point of knowledge; and if he did know all things would he bring souls into existence who he knew would suffer unending punishment? You believe as well as I do that God is omniscient.

Meth. I have briefly answered that already, but as you are disposed to urge it, I will endeavor to answer it in another shape. You say God must know all things or he is not perfect in knowledge. I would remark, we should be very careful how we interfere with the infinite free agency of the Almighty. When you say he must know, you use a compulsory term, that is, he is forced to know; therefore he could not do any

other way, for which reason you do not leave him free in the volition of his wisdom. I think it would be more proper for short-sighted creatures like ourselves to say something like this: God is omniscient, therefore has the power to know all things. Yet I do not wish you to understand me to mean, that there is any thing transpires, either in earth, heaven, or hell, which is unknown to God. I only wish to remove from your mind a mistaken notion, which is this, that these things took place because God knew them. This opinion of yours appears to identify the knowledge of God with his decree. Am I correct in the inference that I have drawn from your remarks.

Univ. I mean this, that if God foresaw all things from eternity, which he must have done if he is absolutely perfect in knowledge, he saw millions of our fellow race, in eternal punishment long before they were born, if your doctrine is true, and consequently they were born for that purpose, and must necessarily go there, or God must be disappointed. Therefore if men must suffer in eternity as you say they will, God must have foreseen it; such suffering, therefore, must be the result of a decree in God.

Meth. It follows, then, if your argument is correct, that the knowledge of God is tantamount to, and identified with, his decree, therefore all that transpires in time, as well as in eternity, must be the result of a decree in God. Hence you have no ground to hope for eternal happiness, because of the truth and goodness of God, from the fact, that if your view of the subject is right, then all things are as God decreed them—for he knows all things, and having decreed them, it is his good pleasure that they should take place. You must, therefore, retreat from this position, or deny the word of God, and acknowledge him to be the greatest sinner in the universe. Let us hear what he says, "It repented God that he made man and it grieved him at his heart." Repented for what? for what was God grieved? Because his purpose and decree were carried out, if your theory is correct, for they did, you say, as he decreed, then he grieved because they did what they did. This course would be ridiculous in a human being, how much more so in the Supreme Governor of the universe! Again, Christ would have gathered the Jews to him, but they would

not, and they did not come. Now, if your theory is correct, they could not come, because God, knowing all things, saw they would not, and therefore when Christ laboured to gather them, he laboured to overturn the decree of his Father, and yet Christ gravely tells us that he "came to do the will of his Father," and God says, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." I ask, would God be well pleased to see his "beloved son" labouring to frustrate his designs, and overturn his decrees? Surely not! "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," 2nd Peter, 3-9. Three things are to be observed here, viz., God knew that all men would not come to repentance,—2nd. It was his will that all men should come to repentance,—3rd. It follows that the knowledge and the decree of God, are not one, and the same; if they were, it would amount to this, viz., God decreed that all men should not come to repentance and be saved, and his will was that they should all come to repentance and be saved, and thus his will would be opposed to his decree, and God would be divided against himself, and consequently could not exist as God. I merely bring up these texts, as a specimen of that numerous class of scriptures which might be produced, bearing with equal strength on the point, to show the inconsistency of your reasoning. But again, if the knowledge of God, and his decree are the same, it follows as a matter of course, that inasmuch as he knew all things from eternity, he knew sin would be introduced into the universe, and knowing it, according to your doctrine, is decreeing it; therefore he must have decreed it; and if so, God is justly chargeable with all the sin in the universe, its pernicious effects, and its entire consequences. To this conclusion your proposition leads, which if you should acknowledge to be true, would deprive you of all hope of eternal happiness on the ground of the "divine goodness," which is your strongest, and indeed your only ground of hope. Your error on this point appears to consist in this, viz., in supposing that sin and misery took place, because God, knowing all things, knew they would. Now, these things do not take place because God knows them, but God knows them because they take place. The proposition placed in this shape, assumes a reasonable aspect; and, as a safe rule of argument, may apply to knowledge, human, angelic, or divine. Apply your rule of

argument to human knowledge, by supposing two men in a quarrel, the contention continues to increase and rises to a high degree, and angry feelings swell in proportion, till at length one draws his sword and stabs the other to the heart. And suppose a third person standing by witnessed the whole scene, would you say that this murder took place because he saw it? or would you not rather say that the bystander saw it because it took place? The same rule will apply to the knowledge of Angels, who witness the transactions of mankind; many, if not most, and perhaps all the vices and virtues of this world, are known to these celestial beings. Would you say all these things take place because Angels know them, or do Angels know them because they take place?

Univ. It is not good reasoning—the cases are not parallel; because Angels and men only know things as they transpire, or in other words when they take place; whereas God not only knows what does take place, but his knowledge of this world shows him what is yet to come, and it is the foreknowledge of God of which I speak.

Meth. The cases are perfectly parallel from the fact that, properly speaking, all is present knowledge with God, with him there is no past—with him there is no future. Past and future, when applied to God, are not appropriate only on the ground of accommodation to us, purposely to modify the sublimity of the subject, and bring it within the reach of our weak understanding. This subject perhaps may be better illustrated by introducing a simple metaphor. Suppose then, two boys to be rolling a marble on a plank, say twelve feet long, one boy standing at one end, the other boy standing at the other end, the marble rolling from one end of the plank to the other. When the marble commences on one end of the plank, it soon performs its journey and arrives at the other end: the boy standing at the further end of the plank, to which point the marble has arrived, is an eye witness to the whole journey performed by the marble; for he stood twelve feet beyond it, and saw it when it began to roll, and watched its progress through every stage of its journey till it arrived at the end. Therefore it may with propriety be said, that the boy was knowing to the whole journey performed by this marble, for he stood at the end and would see from the beginning. But did the marble roll

in this direction because the boy saw it, or did the boy see it because it rolled in that direction? Let this plank represent time, either as a whole, or in its parts, and God existing at one end of this plank, that is, before time was: every thing then in being must have been present to him; for he is Omnipresent. 2nd. God existing through, and on every part of this plank, *i. e.* time, every motion made thereon must be present to him. 3rd. God exists at the further end of this plank, that is, beyond all time—when time is swallowed up in eternity—and everything there must be also present to him, because he exists there. Now what I wish to remark is this, that it is just as possible for the Divine Being to exist beyond all time, where the final issue and end of all are present to him, without this knowledge effecting in the least the moral violation of man; as it was for the boy to stand at the end of the plank, twelve feet beyond the starting point of the marble, and observe its beginning and its end, on the plank, without such observation and knowledge effecting its motion either to hinder or to help it.

Mr. H. here introduces himself as follows:—

Mr. H. I understand from Mr. G. that you and he have had quite a controversy on religious subjects, and that there is a wide difference between you, as far as you have gone. But if I am rightly informed you have not touched upon those points that are calculated to lead directly into the merits of the case, or in other words to lead to a conclusion, and set the matter at rest. Mr. G. is not much of a controversialist, and therefore might not be able to sustain his position, notwithstanding the correctness of his sentiments, in which I have the fullest confidence; and to prevent misgivings in your mind by further defending the doctrine of Universal Salvation, is my only business here to-day.

Meth. The difference of opinion more properly is between Mr. G. and the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have more than once advised him to go and settle it and quarrel no more with his Maker: And as you so heartily concur in his opinion, I would say the same to you, for certainly if you are half as obstinate as Mr. G., I would rather not enter into conversation with you, and especially on points of doctrine, for I think it would be lost labour. But lest you should think that I desire to evade a

controversy through fear of a defeat, and as you say we have not as yet entered upon the points that will lead us to a rational conclusion, I submit.

Mr. H. One of those points on which you have not touched, is the origin of sin, or what is commonly called moral evil. And an investigation of this is essential to a right understanding of the subject; this is the rock on which you split; for you do not pretend to tell how moral evil came, only that it is in the world, and as you say it produces pain and death, and punishment in eternity. Let me ask, have you considered that natural evil is the result of our physical organization? and do you not know that many eminent Divines are of the opinion that moral evil is the necessary result of natural evil; this also is my opinion.

Meth. This is what you call the merits of the case I presume. When I heard this first I thought it equivalent to blasphemy, and I have not as yet changed my mind. If I understand your argument it stands, thus. 1st. God made man with a constitution which unavoidably produced natural evils. 2nd. These natural evils necessarily produced moral evil; which in point of fact stands thus:—moral evil necessarily produced by natural evil, natural evil necessarily produced by the human constitution; the human constitution the necessary result of the creative energy of the Almighty. So that from this it follows: 1st. That either moral evil is not wrong; or 2nd, if it is wrong—if it is sin—it is chargeable upon God and not on man, from the fact that, according to your argument, God made him in such a way that his very existence implied the necessary production of sin. So that while you admit the existence of moral evil, your argument goes to prove that it originated in God. By this course of argument you prove God to be a guilty sinner, and yet upon his "Infinite Holiness" you build your hope of the salvation of all men; now if God is such a being as your argument represents him, his Holiness can give no clue whatever to "Universal Salvation." But again, if God created man under the circumstances of which you speak, those evils to which man is subject, must be the result of design in God. And consequently your argument proves too much for you; for it not only proves that he can punish the guilty, but that he

delights in punishing the innocent also, and that he made man with this intention, and for this spiteful purpose.

Mr. H. I do not say that man does not deserve any punishment, but I contend he does not deserve eternal punishment.

Meth. Yes, but your plea for salvation on the grounds that man does not deserve eternal punishment, or that he deserves no more than he receives in time, is good for nothing, from the fact that he deserves none at all, if moral evil is the necessary result of his constitution; and yet you say they are punished here all they deserve. Now if they are punished for that which is the necessary result of their constitution, they are punished unjustly; for it is as good reasoning to say that man ought to be punished for his existence which he could not avoid, as it is to say that he ought to be punished for sin which is the necessary consequence of that existence. For if mankind are punished in time for the existence of that which they could not prevent, and God inflicts this punishment under those circumstances, it would be a demonstrative proof that God was an unkind and cruel being. And if these principles exist in the Deity, and are manifested in time, we may expect they will be in eternity, and to what extent who can tell? Hence your argument goes fully more to prove universal damnation, than it does universal salvation.

Mr. H. Notwithstanding the severity and dogmatism that have characterized your reply to what I before said, yet nothing therein has convinced me that I am in an error, when I say, that there must have been propensities to sin in Adam, or he could not have sinned. And if there were propensities to sin in him, then sin was the necessary result of these propensities. That man has propensities to sin, all men who believe there is any such thing as sin, will admit, and inasmuch as man has this propensity now, I contend he always had it, for the radical constitution of man has not changed. The infant exhibits propensities to sin which are inseparably connected with its existence. Hence, God creates men now with propensities to sin. This I think you will not deny; for if they are creatures at all, they must have a Creator. I am sure you will not say that any one short of God can create man; why then am I not safe in saying that God created the first man with propensities to sin? For they were exhibited in

him, and that too, in a very early stage of his existence; therefore he must have got them from some source, and I say all he had he received from God. Tell me what he had, whether connected with body or mind, that he did not receive from God: and when you have answered that, I will give you some more, for I have more on hand, some of which perhaps you may think rather intricate.

Meth. I believe it is a general custom among Universalists to argue by asking questions, and some of those questions are very much like your remaining ones, "quite intricate," so much so, that they themselves cannot answer them. And if this should be the case with some of yours, I shall not be much surprised, neither will it be the first instance of the kind that has come under my own observation. But let me observe that your pretended artillery behind will have no tendency to discourage me at least, until brought forth. And when you bring them forward, as I am in search of truth, I shall stand to my position in spite of repeated syllogisms, till driven therefrom by the bayonet of scriptural and philosophical argument. Therefore you will not only have to produce your tremendous artillery, but you will have to use it. You seem to convey the idea that God is still at work creating human souls and bodies. You say, "God creates men now with propensities to sin;" to this I remark, God does not create men at present, either with or without propensities to sin; for he does not create them at all, the work of creation was long since finished. God created but one man, and one woman, and those who now exist have derived their existence from the first pair, therefore it is not strictly true that God creates men "now," much less that "he creates them with propensities to sin." You say you "judge of the past, by the present." My impression is, that if you work much by this rule you will find it a bad one, and even in the present case I think you will find it will not work well. For if I understand your object, in judging of the past by the present, it is to deny the fall of man, and draw an argument from his present fallen condition, to prove that he was created with propensities to sin. That he has "now" propensities to sin I admit, but that he always had, I deny on the authority of the Bible. The following I regard as one proof among many: "And God saw every thing that he had made,

and behold it was very good ;" the man therefore must have been very good !

Mr. H. To understand that test, literally, will prove too much for you, for if all that God made was literally good, you would not only have a good man but a good beast, a good fish, a good bird, and as you believe in the existence of a little devil, then God must have made him, and you would have a good devil also. The text you will perceive, I think does not refer to moral goodness. The expression is used to show that each individual creature was calculated to fill the place that God had designed for it. And that their constitution was adapted to their outward condition, and their size and proportion being as God designed they should be. He therefore saw no room for improvement, and consequently pronounced them all "good, and very good."

Meth. I do not understand this method of mixing every thing in a heap, neither do I believe you are justified in trying to bring man, that noble creature of God, to whom he has imparted such amazing energies, down to a level with the brute in the field. Much less are you justified in trying to raise that inveterate enemy of God and man to a climax of moral perfection equal to Adam in his state of pure innocence, and perfect Holiness. A course of this kind I regard as highly culpable—grossly immoral, and exceedingly insulting to every moral man. But in reply to your view of goodness, I would remark. 1st. That that which constitutes a good beast would not make a good man. In the brute creation we discover instinct and equilibrium of parts ; or as you say, " well proportioned." They have a constitution adapted to their outward condition, and the five senses which constitute animal life. And as every thing which God made was " very good," it follows as a matter of course that the beast was a " good" beast without a moral faculty. But can it be said of the man either that he had no moral faculty, or that he was a good man without it ? We learn that God " made man in his own image." This must refer to his moral powers, and is illustrated by Solomon, Eccl. 7-29. " Lo this only have I found that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." To him was given a moral precept, viz., " in the day thou eatest thereof, &c." Seeing therefore that the man not only had

animal life, but intellectual and moral faculties; and as such was pronounced to be "very good:" it follows that he was good in all his parts, and consequently was "very good" in a moral sense. But this would not be said of the beast, the fish, and the fowl; because they possessed no moral faculty, yet they were good in all their parts. But they were not good men! You say, "the devil must be a good devil because God made him." The devil, (as I have already shown in conversation with Mr. G.) is evidently a real being, capable of action and suffering. And as a creature, of course God made him, but not in his present condition, he made him an Angel and placed him on probation from whence he fell, by voluntary acts of rebellion against God. Let it be remembered that God is absolutely holy, and therefore nothing unholy can proceed from him. But as he sees proper to make moral agents and place them on probation, in accordance with his infinite wisdom and holiness; they may if they are determined to sin against him so alter their condition as to become destitute of all the good which God imparted, and be filled with all evil. This was the case with those "who kept not their first estate," that is to say the Angels, "who are now confined in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day.

Mr. H. If the devil is a real being and was placed on probation and fell, his probation must have been in heaven, and he fall therefrom, if this is true it proves too much for your doctrine as well as mine. For if there has "been war in heaven" and part of the Angels literally cast out,—and if there have been probationers there—there may yet be probationers there,—and another war may break out and others may fall, and so on till there be none left. The truth is they are figurative expressions and are so to be understood.

Meth. You object to the existence of the devil, or evil spirits because the scriptures represent them as having fallen; or as Jude says, "kept not their first estate." You say, "if he fell he must have fallen from heaven." Now you will observe that "heaven" has different meanings in the Bible. The atmosphere, starry regions, the gospel dispensation, the grace of God in the heart, the residence of holy Angels are all designated by the term "heaven."

So that if the Scriptures had said those angels fell from heaven we must have understood it, and explained it by corroborating tests. But we are relieved from all this trouble, because there is no such test. You speak as if I had said there had been probationers in heaven; and as if I believed those angels fell from heaven, understanding the term here to mean the kingdom of Glory. You say "there may be another war there," as much as if I believed that there had once been war in the kingdom of Glory.

Mr. H. I supposed you believed those things because I know it is the opinion of Methodists generally, and of several of your principal authors; and I have frequently heard these sentiments advanced from the pulpit.

Meth. What others may have said, I know not, neither am I responsible for their opinions. But I will give you my own: And 1st. Those "angels" are real beings, and are in a state of inexpressible misery. 2d. They were not always so; "they kept not their first estate." "First estate" pre-supposes they were once happy; because it is the estate in which the great Author of their being placed them; and it is reasonable to suppose that He would place them in a state of happiness. 3d. Their first residence was not literally in heaven, for there is no text in the Bible that would favor such a doctrine. 4. They were on trial, or they could not have fallen. 5. Their fall was the result of voluntary action—"they kept not their first estate."

Univ. I have been paying deep attention to you and Mr. H. during the discussion, and I am pleased to see you both preserve such an even temper. I wish, however, to ask you a few questions, which I forgot the other day through embarrassment: Why did God, after He had created man, send the Devil, (who, you say, is a real being) into the world to tempt them to transgress His law?

Meth. The question is not put in a proper shape to expect an answer at all; and I think it would be doing you no injustice if I were to pass it by unnoticed. But lest you should take occasion to triumph on that ground, I submit to make a few observations thereon: And, 1st. I would remark, that although I believe the Devil to be a real being, yet I do not

think God sent him here at all; much less did He send him here to tempt man to transgress His law. This would be inconsistent with the Divine character. 2d. No part of the word of God, when rightly explained, will represent the Almighty as sending the Devil among men. The prophet says, "Wo to the inhabitants of the earth, for the Devil is come down among men." But he does not say that God sent him to tempt them to transgress his law. "God is not tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." This would not be true if God sent the devil among men, to tempt them to transgress His law. You intimate that if there is such a being as the devil among men, it must be God that sent him there. You might as well say, if there ever was a man who went to the tavern and got intoxicated, it was God who sent him there for that purpose. But if you mean only to say, why did God permit him to exist and to come among men; and designed that as an argument against his existence, I would say it can have but little weight in your favor. For if I should confess to you my ignorance of the matter, that would not prove but other men might assign several reasons. But if no reason could be given in the present age, it does not follow that none will ever be found who can solve the difficulty. And if they never can be found who can explain it, it is none the more untrue because it is unexplainable in its nature. To dispute the existence of all things which we cannot comprehend, it is effect to dispute all existence. And to dispute the existence of a creature because we cannot see with one glance all the great ends of his being, is equally absurd.

Univ. If the Devil is a real being (as you say he is), and as bad as you represent him; and if he came down into this world, and tempted our first parents to sin against God, and robbed them of happiness, and exposed them to eternal punishment, as your doctrine teaches, then the Divine character stands impeached; for this reason,—that if he did not send him (as you argue) he permitted him, and to permit a being of that nature to exist, who produces sin and misery throughout time, and inexpressible punishment in eternity, would be cruel in the extreme. But I do not believe that God could, consistent with the holiness of his character, allow such a being to exist and rove at large among men.

Meth. You believe that God is too good to allow the devil to exist; yet you argue that God made man with a constitution which necessarily produced moral evil. If you can believe that God could make a man, in whose heart he planted the seeds of moral evil, which unavoidably produced in him evil thoughts, which evil thoughts necessarily propelled him on to sinful action: and thus brought death into the world, and misery of every kind and degree upon his posterity, I cannot see why you could not believe that God could make the devil, even as he now is. For your sentiment is that God made Adam with evil propensities which necessarily produced the present state of the human mind. Now, if you can swallow down such doctrine as this, you will have to strain but very little more to believe that God could make the devil with all the atrocity of his nature which he now possesses. This is a pill which a Methodist could no more swallow than he could make a world!

Univ. You speak of the circumstances of creation, and the effects of the human constitution, with as much concern of mind as if it was not the prerogative of God to pardon the offender. Though he did make man with propensities to evil, as is said by the prophet, "I create good, and I create evil, I do these things, saith the Lord." Yet, notwithstanding the amount of moral evil that may have been, or may yet be produced, God can, and eventually will, overrule the whole by the exercise of his prerogative in granting a pardon to the transgressors. Therefore, had I no other argument to prove the eternal salvation of all men, this would be sufficient, in connection with the Divine goodness. For if the sinner was condemned to death, it was still the Divine prerogative to revoke the sentence. The prerogative of man, in human tribunals, extends as far as this. It is not unfrequent that the criminal obtains pardon from the same authority that sanctioned the sentence. This pardon is already granted. Read Paul to the Romans 5: 18. "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

Meth. The more you endeavor to extricate yourself, the

deeper you sink into the mire. You intimated, a short time since, that God made man with unholy propensities; now you intimate that his object was that he might pardon the sinner. Allow me to remark,—1st. I cannot see that the case of man, under the circumstances for which you contend, requires any pardon; for if his moral action were the result of his physical organization, then, whatever he did he could not avoid.—Therefore if he did that which he could not avoid, and only that, it follows either that what he did was right, or if it was wrong, the wrong was not in him. 2d. You represent the Almighty as creating man and implanting in his breast unholy principles, which necessarily lead to unholy practices, that he might have the opportunity of granting a pardon. Pardon under these circumstances would be uncalled for; indeed, it would be worse than nothing, inasmuch as there was no offence given. Do you think that I would be under any obligation to ask pardon even of the Almighty, if I had never transgressed his law? Or suppose I had gone contrary to his proscribed law, being propelled by principles implanted within me by the God that made me, should I ask pardon?—would you, or any other reasonable man? I think not. And should God grant “a pardon” under those circumstances, it would be no satisfaction to me, and it would be no honor to himself. Indeed, “a pardon” of this nature would be regarded by all men as an insult rather than looked upon as a favor. You think the Scriptures will bear you out in your opinion. Your quotation is not exactly correct. It reads as follows: “I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things,” Isa. 45:7. By reading the chapter you will see,—1st. That it has no reference to our first parents, to whom you have applied it. Verses 12 and 13 read thus: “I have made the earth and created man upon it; and I, even my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways.” Now, as these fifteen verses, in which are embraced those above, all refer to the same circumstance, it follows that if your text should be applied to our first parents, to prove that God created them with evil propensities, it would involve a contradiction. You

will perceive that verse 13 says, "I have raised him up in righteousness." The whole context refers to the Jews in captivity. "Good and evil" refers to their national prosperity and adversity; him that God raised in righteousness was Cyrus the Persian prince; and no part of it has any reference to the original state of man, which was the subject under consideration.

Univ. I am willing to waive that question if you will come to the point, and tell me whether it is, or is not, the prerogative of God to pardon the transgressor notwithstanding he annexed to the transgression of his law the penalty of death, was it his prerogative to revoke that sentence?

Meth. What you mean by "revoking the sentence," I presume, is granting a pardon without an atonement; and if that is what you mean, I would say it is absolutely impossible in the nature of things.

Univ. Then all things are not possible with God; and if he could not revoke a sentence, and pardon a criminal, his power, in that respect, is not equal to an earthly monarch.

Meth. All the acts of God, at all times, in all places, and on all occasions, must agree with the holiness, justice, benevolence, wisdom, and the immutability of his character. But to extend pardon to the rebellious, on your principle, would be incompatible with his attributes, and his office as Supreme Governor of the universe. This, I think, will be made plain by the following considerations: 1st. Had God revoked the sentence it would have argued weakness on his part—as much as if he had said, my law was too rigorous—too severe—the transgression does not require so great punishment—indeed it requires none, therefore I revoke the sentence. 2d. He would have proved himself a mutable being by revoking the sentence. This would have shown a want of firmness—hence it never could have been said, "I, the Lord, change not." 3rd. It would contravene the ends of good government, for this reason: To revoke a sentence because the law was transgressed, would be to encourage rebellion in every part of his empire. 4th. It would give just cause of complaint to all good subjects, on the ground that their happiness and safety were thereby endangered—the Supreme Magistrate having

treated his law with indifference by revoking the sentence passed upon the rebellious. 5th. To grant pardon unconditionally, and continue the penalty, would be equally inglorious to good government, from the fact that if one receives pardon without conditions, another would naturally expect it. And a law of this kind would have no tendency whatever to prevent evil, but rather to encourage it.

Univ. Worse! and worse! for if God cannot pardon a sinner without impeaching his character as a public officer, I would like to know how any can be saved according to your own doctrine. For you say man must repent and obtain a knowledge of sins forgiven, in order to be saved.

Meth. What I said before had a reference to the Divine administration aside from the atonement. And the reason of my speaking as I did (the truth of which I still maintain) was because I saw you had aimed a death-blow (!) at the atonement of Christ. But now, I would remark, that although the law condemns the sinner to death for having violated its just claims, yet, through the atonement, the sentence may be suspended,—pardon offered on the conditions of the Gospel—the sinner saved if he conform thereto—the purity of the Divine character retained—his law honored—and the ends of good government preserved. But all this, mark you! is because Jesus Christ has died, the just for the unjust.

Univ. If you have proved anything here, it is only that an atonement was required; and, according to your view of the nature of atonement, all men will ultimately be saved. You believe that Christ died for every man; and Paul plainly intimates that in Christ all the human family will be saved: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Meth. If I have proved the necessity of an atonement to provide for the salvation of man, by offering pardon, I have proved too much for you. For if man could not be saved without an honorable medium, through which God could communicate pardon to the transgressor; if this medium had not been provided, then man could not have enjoyed everlasting happiness with his Maker. Indeed, his very being—his life and happiness here, as well as hereafter, are all blessings resulting from the atonement of Christ. You find your former posi-

tion so untenable, (to which you held for a while with such a tenacious grasp), therefore you are compelled to abandon it. Now, as your only alternative, you have recourse to the atonement. The text which you bring to prove the unconditional salvation of all men, because Christ has died, has no reference at all to the life of the soul, but to the resurrection of the body. It has no reference to the moral condition of any man; but merely contemplates the bringing up of all men from the dead, irrespective of their moral character. The next verse, you will perceive, intimates a difference in the condition of the dead—"every man in his own order!" So far from an unconditional salvation intimated by the apostle, that in reading the chapter you will find the very opposite principle enforced. The Corinthians are taught that their salvation depended upon their receiving the gospel which the apostle preached, and continuing to observe its holy precepts. See 1st and 2nd verses of the same chapter, in which the text quoted by you is contained. I do not fully understand what you mean by saying that my doctrine contemplates the ultimate salvation of all, because it admits that Christ died for all.

Unit. I mean this,—you believe that Christ died for every man—that the transgressions of all men, in every part and age of the world, were laid upon him—that his sufferings and death were equal to them all—and that thereby the demands of justice were fully met in the person of Christ. Methodist theology coincides with this. The founder of Methodism in his poetry, in many places, expresses this sentiment; but most emphatically in the following words:

"The debt's discharged, the ransom's paid;
My Father must forgive."

Meth. I have never said, neither do I believe, that the death of Christ was equal to the sins of any man; for it was not on this principle that he died. Much less would I say that his death was equal to the sins of all mankind. An equivalent to their sins was not required; and in the nature of things it could not be given. The death of Christ was never intended to meet the full demands of the law. The law has the same claim upon the sinner connected with the death of Christ, as it has aside from the death of Christ. For although Christ has

died, yet the law holds the sinner guilty, and justly condemns him to death, for having violated its righteous claims. To explain this subject fully—in its relations to the sinner, to the law of God, to the Divine Being, as the public officer of the universe; or, in other words, the Supreme Magistrate, to the entire universe—would occupy too much time, not only for you, but for me also. Yet, as it is a very important point, I must briefly notice a few particulars: 1st. The Scriptures represent Christ as having been made a curse for us; not that he was literally cursed by God, in our stead, but only on this principle; because it is written, “cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” 2d. He is represented as bearing our sins in his own body; as carrying them away; as being wounded in our stead. 3d. As having bought us with a price. Now you will observe that all these figurative expressions concentrate and end in one great truth, viz: that Christ died to make it possible for God to pardon the sinner. For if Christ had entered into a commercial contract, and paid literally the full value of all our souls, then there would have been no need of his bearing “our sins in his own body on the tree.” If “bearing our sins” means to suffer all that which the sinner deserves, then there was no need that we should be “bought with a price,” because this would be to pay a double price: 1st. To suffer all that was due to the sinner; and, 2d, To purchase him by a commercial contract. The upshot of the whole is this: God loved the sinner, and was good enough to pardon him, but could not consistent with his character as Supreme Ruler of the universe. Christ died! and the dignity of his rank; the superior excellence of his person; and the holiness of his character, told to the universe that the sentence which the law passed upon the sinner was just, and that the law was more honored by the death of such a person than it possibly could have been had its claims been literally met by their individual sufferings. Therefore the Divine character, on the principle of the atonement, could be sustained in offering pardon. The holy intelligencies of other worlds would see, that while God loved the sinner, yet he regarded his law. Christ honored that law by his death. The sinner could now be saved on the grounds of repentance, and faith in Christ. God, while he saved the sinner, was just; the

ends
throu
the v
tions
the v

R
and,
you
writ
pect
or d
min
all t
few
prin
assu
dial
refu
hon
ject

P
dist
we
Ser
not
duc
fici
tha
nov
is y
to
anc
res
eve
fal
P
me
De

ends of good government preserved; and all holy intelligencies throughout Jehovah's empire, as they become acquainted with the wonderful and glorious plan, will re-echo their acclamations in loudest strains. Oh! the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and mercy of God.

READER!—Allow me to make a few additional remarks; and, 1st,—I wish to observe that the dialogue through which you have passed grew out of a real circumstance to which the writer was a witness. 2d. It was not published with the expectation of presenting you with any thing particularly new or deep. It was not intended for those who have applied their minds to the study of those subjects, and understand them in all their bearings. 3d. You perceive it only touches upon a few of those controverted points, which are urged against the principle of future rewards and punishments, with so much assurance; yet these few points that are brought forward in the dialogue, are among the most potent; and if they have been refuted, they must fall in the estimation of all discerning and honest minds; and, as a matter of course, every subordinate objection falls with them.

Permit me to ask you a few questions: Are you a Methodist? If you are, you have embraced those sentiments which we hold most dear—which we highly value and regard as Scriptural; yet, do not think yourself inevitably safe—think not that your belief will save you, unless it is constantly reduced to a practical use. Do you think your firmness is a sufficient guarantee for your present and eternal happiness, and that nothing can move you from those principles which you now hold, and those practices to which you now adhere? If this is your case, it is an additional evidence that you have still cause to watch and pray. “Be not, therefore, highminded, but fear;” and fear, too, lest a promise being left you of entering into that rest, you should at last come short of it. Guard, then, against every kind and degree of skepticism, lest you, even you, should fall from the hope of the Gospel.

But should these lines meet the eye of a Universalist, allow me to appeal to your reason, by asking you, in the first place, Do you claim to be infallible? Do you think your judgment

surpasses that of all other men? As a reasonable person, you would not dare to exhibit such presumption and self-conceit, as to answer in the affirmative; and if not, you must see, at least, a possibility of your being in a mistake. And should you be mistaken in your view, and these views having influenced your conduct, I wish to enquire if you have considered the consequences?

That we may bring this matter a little closer, let us suppose a case, for example. In making your estimate of men, you form a high opinion of a neighbor, in whom you place implicit confidence, but at length find yourself mistaken. Now, this hasty conclusion of yours may be attended with a serious loss of property, as well as much mortification of feeling, and deep remorse for your imprudence; yet the consideration that you have opportunity to improve, tends to sooth your feelings, while the present loss and affliction become absorbed in the cheering hope of future amendment.

Here is a case, then, where you have learned a useful lesson, but sustained a heavy loss. You have bought wisdom at a dear rate; yet, permit me to say that the loss which you will sustain by embracing and acting upon the principles of Universalism, is so far beyond all this, that they scarcely admit of comparison. Remember it is no less than the loss of your soul! That Universalism has this tendency, is indubitably evident from the following considerations:

1. It stands opposed to the word of God. Nothing is found in the holy Bible that will favor it in the least. True, its pretensions are great, but they are ill founded. Its promises, we are aware, are numerous, but they are abortive. We do not deny but it has its threatenings, but they are so exceedingly few, and so remarkably faint, that no one fears them. Its principles stand opposed to such commandments as the following: "Do to all men as ye would they should do to you. "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you." "Pay all their dues." Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." The principles of Universalism not only prompt men to slight these and similar injunctions, but operating in connection with the depraved and fallen nature of man, will lead him in the opposite course. So that "enter into thy closet"—"pray

without ceasing"—"repent and be converted," &c., are utterly despised.

2. Universalism disregards the threatenings of the Bible—such, for example, as: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God"—"they shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone"—"these shall go away into everlasting punishment"—"the soul that sinneth it shall die"—"depart ye cursed into everlasting fire." These, and every other of a similar character, are looked upon with a sneer of contempt.

3. Its tendency, instead of helping, is to suppress religious principles and practices. It holds forth no kind of inducement to holiness; and manifests no concern for the happiness, nor any regret at the wickedness of mankind.

4. But it tends very much to encourage wickedness, of every kind and degree. If the word of God says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;" "Thou shalt not steal," or murder, or bear false witness, or covet, or break the Sabbath, &c., Universalism comes up with all the shameless impudence of a fiend, and gravely promises eternal salvation to all mankind, whether these injunctions are observed or not.

5. Are you at the head of a family, and influenced by these soul-destroying principles? I would entreat you, if you have no regard for your own soul, to try at least and exercise some pity on your children. Do not take the advantage of them, by infusing into their minds at the dawn of reason, those pernicious principles. Perhaps you find it no difficult thing to reproach the people of God, and encourage those committed to your care to do the same: and to brand the followers of God as "enthusiasts" may be to you a source of pleasure.

But suppose, in the midst of your sport, and in the height of your glee, you should be cut off by sudden death, as thousands have been before you. And suppose when the dreadful realities of eternity are first unfolded to your view, you find it to be a fact, that you have made your bed in hell. Solemn thought!—what is wrong? Should you then be compelled to reply to such interrogation, your answer would be,—Universalism is a fallacy. I am lost! forever lost!! lost beyond the reach of

mercy. In this condition, what do you think you would be willing to give (suppose you had it in your possession) to get back that precious time which you have spent in perverting the Scriptures, and twisting them to suit your own carnal feelings and establish a system which has ruined your soul for ever and ever.

But, in conclusion, let me ask what harm can it possibly do you to renounce those principles? What loss will you or can you sustain? Surely none in temporal things; for what has Universalism given you in this respect that other men do not possess. They appear to be no better off in the world than other men. Do you think you will lose your reputation and become unpopular?—you ought to have no concern on this ground, from the fact that if you are popular at all in religious matters, it is only among that class of people, which, I am thankful to know, forms but a small part of the community. And if popularity should be your only object, you would be greatly the gainer; for where you lost on one hand, on the other you would gain a hundred fold. It is true, you will have to leave off your ungodly companions, but this will surely be no loss; on the contrary, it will be a gain; especially in a temporal point of view, both of health, time, and money.

The intellect will sustain no loss by this change of sentiment and circumstances. Many have tried it and lost nothing in this respect. Universalism, instead of enlarging, has a powerful tendency to contract the mind: Those who adhere to this theory, very soon become dogmatists; and a dogmatist in religion is not far from a bigot! There is no religious loss to be sustained by renouncing Universalism; for if it deserves the name of religion at all, it would be still a religion opposed to that of the Bible; and all such religions are better lost than kept. Reader, search for truth, search diligently, be persevering, be determined to obtain it, never mind the cost; love truth for truth's sake; buy it, but, mark you, never sell it!!

